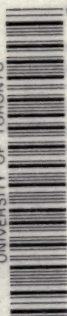


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From the home front

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FROM THE HOME FRONT

VERSES
BY
OWEN
SEAMAN





I

FROM THE HOME FRONT

BY THE SAME AUTHOR

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FROM THE HOME FRONT

VERSES BY
OWEN SEAMAN

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FROM THE HOME FRONT

To the Memory of Field-Marshal Earl Kitchener

[BORN JUNE 24TH, 1850. DIED ON SERVICE,
JUNE 5TH, 1916.]

SOLDIER of England, you who served her well
And in that service, silent and apart,
Achieved a name that never lost its spell
Over your country's heart ;—

Who saw your work accomplished ere at length
Shadows of evening fell, and creeping Time
Had bent your stature or resolved the strength
That kept its manhood's prime ;—

Great was your life, and great the end you
made,
As through the plunging seas that whelmed
your head
Your spirit passed, unconquered, unafraid,
To join the gallant dead.

But not by death that spell could pass away
That fixed our gaze upon the far-off goal,
Who, by your magic, stand in arms to-day
A nation one and whole,

TO MEMORY OF F.-M. EARL KITCHENER

Now doubly pledged to bring your vision true
Of darkness vanquished and the dawn set
free

In that full triumph which your faith foreknew
But might not live to see.

June 14, 1916.

The New Armies: the Test of Battle

WE are not good at shouting in the street,
At waving flags or tossing caps in air ;
We take our triumphs, as we take defeat,
With scarce a hint of having turned a hair ;
And so our pride to-day
Declines to boom itself the German way.

Yet we are proud because at last, at last,
We look upon the dawn of our desire ;
Because the weary waiting-time is passed
And we have tried our temper in the fire ;
And, proving word by deed,
Have kept the faith we pledged to France at need.

But most because, from desk and mine and mart,
Springing to face a task undreamed before,
Our men, inspired to play their prentice part
Like soldiers lessoned in the school of war,
True to their breed and name
Went flawless through the fierce baptismal flame.

And he who brought these armies into life,
And on them set the impress of his will—
Could he be moved by sound of mortal strife
There where he lies, their Captain, cold and still
Under the shrouding tide,
How would his great heart stir and glow with pride !

July 12, 1916.

Bleatings of an Imperial Lamb

[Based on an interview given by the Crown Prince to a Mr. Hale, ex-clergyman, the representative of Hearst, who at this time owned a number of anti-British newspapers.]

YE who thought that Little Willie
Would be sick if war should cease ;
Who supposed his chest was chilly
Toward the pink-eyed bird of Peace ;

Listen to the soft endearing
Language, as of Love inspired,
Which he uttered in the hearing
Of a clergyman (retired).

“ Will this dreadful conflict never end ?
O to see its final Day ! ”
So he bleated to the reverend
Journalist from U.S.A.

“ Tell them there in New York City
How this butchery rends my heart ;
What a pity ! What a pity !
Such a waste of life and art !

BLEATINGS OF AN IMPERIAL LAMB

“ Art, I say. By careful study
We create, to kill or maim,
Tools of torture, strange and bloody,
Poisoned gas and liquid flame ;

“ Yet (for we are kind as gallant
And with all would fain be friends)
We would sooner see our talent
Turned to philanthropic ends.

“ How I wish your free-born nation,
Fed too long on English lies,
Could by heavenly revelation
Probe the facts with Prussian eyes !

“ Ah, but Truth and Truth’s corollaries
Will not thrive on neutral ground ;
Where your treasure (that’s the dollar) is
There your Yankee hearts are found.

“ No such motive pricks the German ;
Not in loot is our delight ;
Love and Mercy and the Sermon
On the Mount—for these we fight.

“ O how often I have sat, O
Sat and cursed this wicked strife,
Musing in some lonely chateau
On my poor neglected wife.

“ For from time to time I rather
Miss the old domestic touch ;
As a husband and a father
I am absent far too much.

BLEATINGS OF AN IMPERIAL LAMB

“ Yes, in many an alien show-place,
Though the vintage wine flowed free,
I have told myself there’s no place
Tantamount to Home for me.

“ Say all this to New York City,
Mention it to Mr. Hearst,
How I cried, ‘ O what a pity ! ’
Till you thought my heart would burst.”

October 11, 1916.

Idylls of the King of Prussia

A Fragment.

So spake Sir Gerard (U.S.A.) and ceased.
Then answered William, talking through his hat:
“When first the heathen rose against our realm,
That haunt of peace where all day long occurred
The cooing of innumerable doves,
I hailed my knighthood where I sat in hall
At high Potsdam the Palace, and they came;
And all the rafters rang with rousing *Hochs*.

“So to my feet they drew and kissed my boots
And laid their mailly fists in mine and sware
To reverence their Kaiser as their God
And *vice versâ*; to uphold the Faith
Approved by me as Champion of the Church;
To ride abroad redressing Belgium’s wrongs;
To honour treaties like a virgin’s troth;
To serve as model in the nation’s eyes
Of strength with sweetness wed; to hack their
way
Without superfluous violence; to spare
The best cathedrals lest my heart should bleed,
Nor butcher babes and women, or at least
No more than needful—in a word, behave
Like Prussian officers, the flower of men.

IDYLLS OF THE KING OF PRUSSIA

“I bade them take ensample from their Lord
Of perfect manners, wearing on their helms
The bouquet of a blameless Junkerhood,
And be a law of Culture to themselves,
Though other laws, not made in Germany,
Should perish, being scrapped. For so I deemed
That this our Order of the Table Round
Should mould its Christian pattern on the spheres,
Itself unchanged amid a world new-made,
And men should say, in that fair after-time,
‘The old Order sticketh, yielding place to none.’”

So he. Whereat that other held his peace,
Seeming, for courtesy, to yield assent.
But, as within the lists at Camelot
Some temporary knight mislays his seat
And falls, and, falling, lets his morion loose,
And lights upon his head, and all the spot
Swells like a pumpkin, and he hides the bulge
Beneath his gauntlet lest it cause remark
And curious comment—so behind his hand
Sir Gerard’s cheek, that had his tongue inside,
Swelled like a pumpkin. . . .

August 22, 1917.

A School for Statesmen

[The *Hamburger Fremdenblatt*, in an article on our Ambassador at Petrograd, ascribed his success as a diplomat to his passion for golf—"if one can speak of passion in connection with this cold game of meadow billiards." "The conditions," it went on to say, "in which this rather tiresome game is played do really produce the qualities necessary for any statesmanlike or diplomatic work. . . . Silent, tough, resigned, unbroken . . . the good golfer walks round his field, keeps his eye on the ball and steers for his goal. . . . Sir George Buchanan walked round the whole golf field of Europe for years until at last he was able in Petrograd to hurl the ball into the goal."]

OFt have I wondered as my weapon's edge
Disintegrated solid chunks of greenery,
Or as my pillule flew the bounding hedge
Into outlying sections of the scenery,
What moral value might accrue.
From billiards played beneath the blue.

Little I fancied when I topped the sphere
And on its candour left a coarse impression,
Or in the bed of some revolting mere
Mislaid three virgin globes in swift succession,
That I was learning how to grip
The rudiments of statesmanship.

A SCHOOL FOR STATESMEN

Yet so it was. I schooled myself to gaze
Upon the object with a firmly glued eye
And, though I moved by strange and devious
ways,

To keep in view the goal, or *finis ludi*,
And ever let my language be
The language of diplomacy.

Thus Balfour learned the politician's game,
And thus Lloyd George was trained to be a
Premier ;

Thence many a leader who has leapt to fame
Got self-control, grew harder, tougher,
phlegmier,
Reared in the virtues which prevail
At Walton Heath and Sunningdale.

Golf being then the source of so much good,
I own my conscience suffers certain wrenches
Recalling how the links of Chorley Wood
Have seen me on the Sabbath carving trenches,
Where Tommies might be taught to pitch
The deadly bomb from ditch to ditch.

For I reflect that my intruding spade,
That blocked the foursome and debarred the
single,
May well have checked some statesman yet
unmade,
Some budding Hogge, some mute inglorious
Pringle ;
And that is why my shovel shrinks
From excavating other links.

April 18, 1917.

The British Dragon

[The Kaiser's Chancellor, in an interview with the American journalist, Karl von Wiegand, accused England of militarism, and alleged that we pursued towards Germany a policy of envelopment (*Einkreisungspolitik*).]

THEY mocked us for a peaceful folk,
A land that flowed with beer and chops ;
Napoleon (ere we had him broke)
Remarked our taste for keeping shops ;
And William, in his humorous way,
Thought that we must have all gone barmy
Because we joined so large a fray
- With so absurdly small an army.

Opinions alter. Now it seems,
Under our outer rind, or peel,
Deep at the core of England's schemes
There lurked a lust for blood and steel ;
Herr Bethmann-Hollweg he proclaims
The War was due to our intrigue and
Expounds our militaristic aims
Into the ear of Herr von Wiegand.

We are a dragon belching fire,
One of those horrors, spawned in hell,
Who come from wallowing in the mire
To crunch the innocent damosel ;

THE BRITISH DRAGON

And when we've nosed about and found
What looks to be a toothsome jawful
We call our mates and ring her round
With other dragons just as awful.

Prussia was ever such a maid ;
Pink-toed and fair and free from guile
She frolicked in the flowery glade,
Pursuing Culture all the while ;
Then, coached by Grey, the monsters came,
And their behaviour (something horrid)
Bethmann condemns, and brands the blame
Upon the premier dragon's forehead.

May 31, 1916.

England's Call to the Rabbit

COME out, come out, and play the game ;
Boldly vacate your burrow ;
Slack not nor shirk for very shame,
But be your watchword " Thorough " ;
Step forth as briskly as you can
And face the music like a man.

Stay not to share the Cuthbert's fate,
But chuck your *rôle* of coward ;
We watch you, knowing well how great
The sacrifice and how hard ;
In all your paws your courage take
And do your turn for England's sake.

Shall she, the land that gave you birth,
Go short of food and sicken ?
She needs you for her hollow girth
Disguised as curried chicken ;
Come, ere the precious hour is lost,
And join our patriot holocaust.

We are prepared to comb you out
By way of fuse or ferret,
But you would sooner earn, no doubt,
The meed of willing merit—
Posthumous knighthood (K.B.E.),
Or damehood, as the case may be.

ENGLAND'S CALL TO THE RABBIT

Yonder the Boy-Scout waits to shoot
(*Dulce pro patria mori !*) ;

Give him the moribund's salute
And rush to death and glory,
Passing, amid ecstatic Cheeros,
Straight to Valhalla's hall of heroes.

And, should the errant scatter-gun
Wherewith he hopes to hit you
Misjudge your swiftness as you run,
Halt and remain *in situ*,
And let him pop and pop and pop
Until you ultimately drop.

Or, if you have no strong desire
To meet a death so messy,
And feel that in a noose of wire
Your corpse would look more dressy,
Insert your neck within a trap—
It's all the same to Arthur Yapp.

So shall your valour save the race
And strike the Kaiser stony ;
And o'er your carcase, singing grace,
We'll bless the name of coney,
And say, " His end was very good ;
He died as British rabbits should."

January 23, 1918.

The Great Bulgar Mystery

WHERE is our Ferdie all this while ?
Nobody seems to know ;
Nobody's seen his foxy smile
Anywhere near the Show ;
Signs of his eagle nose appear
Neither in Mackensen's hindmost rear,
Nor where the forts of Monastir
Wait for the knock-out blow.

Most of his friends have viewed the fray
Perched upon distant heights ;
William, for one, in his fearless way,
Figures at lots of fights ;
Even Franz, who is oh, so old,
Taking his chance of catching cold,
Friskily starts for the Front, I'm told,
Eager to see the sights.

Tino would plant his tent with joy
Under Larissa's skies,
Saying " Ta-ta ! " to his dear Tatoi,
Winking his neutral eyes ;
Thither his traps he'd gladly shunt,
Staking his all on the German stunt,
Only—he hasn't got a front,
Thanks to the rude Allies.

THE GREAT BULGAR MYSTERY

Where does our Ferdie hide his beak
When he should up and act,
Spending at least one day per week
Watching his Bulgars whacked ?
Rumours have run, and likely too,
How in Vienna he lies *perdu*,
Snug in his hole till the War is through,
Keeping his head intact.

October 25, 1916.

“ It is the Cause ”

I took a flat in Whitehall Land

Whence I could watch with native pride
The bridge of Charing Cross that spanned,
A thing of grace, the admiring tide ;
Commanding also, from its rear,
The effigy of Bartle Frere.

And when above the trammy marge

My open casement wooed the breeze,
And faint from many a seaward barge
Floated the gay and ribald wheeze,
Something—I can’t say clearly what—
Recalled *The Lady of Shalott*.

Fair was the prospect (few, I ween,

So smile upon a Cockney’s gaze),
And best at evening when the scene
Included Phœbus’ final rays
Reflected in the wharves that flank
The mud upon the Surrey bank.

And now on my astonished eyes,

And flush with my protesting nose,
Behold a sudden street arise

Of Governmental bungalows
Like to the gourd that in a night
Rose on the prophet’s staggered sight.

“IT IS THE CAUSE”

Here, posted by the humorous Powers,
Masses of Transport Service scribes
Will dream away the laggard hours
And interchange familiar gibes,
Being paid—with my War-taxes, too—
To sit and block my river view.

With miles of local golfing links
And wastes of park in which to herd
The Great Uncombed, the flapper minx,
Official cussedness preferred
To waive all eligible sites
And intercept my Ancient Lights.

But do I murmur? No, not I.
A sense of Transport in the air
Uplifts my soul—I neither sigh
Nor seek a less congested lair,
Proud of the Cause, and greatly cheered
To have my scenery commandeered.

November 29, 1916.

Vienna-Bound : a Reverie en route

[A Wireless Press telegram says : "The German Imperial train has reached Constantinople in order to transport the Sultan to Vienna, to take part in the conference of Sovereigns to be held there."]

I HATE all trains and told them so ;
I said that I should much prefer
(Being, as Allah knows, no traveller)
To stick to Stamboul and the *status quo*.

They said, " If you would rather walk,
Pray do so ; it will save the fare ; "
Which shows that William (who will take
the Chair)
Insists that I shall come and hear him talk.

I've never tried a train before ;
It makes me sick ; it knocks my nerves ;
The noises and the tunnels and the curves
Add a new horror to the woes of war.

What am I here for, anyhow ?
I'm summoned for appearance' sake,
To nod approval at the Chief, but take
No further part in his one-man pow-wow.

VIENNA-BOUND: A REVERIE EN ROUTE

My job is just to sit, it seems,
And act the silent super's *rôle*,
The while I wish myself, with all my soul,
Safe back in one or more of my hareems.

I'd let the Conference go hang ;
Any who likes can have my pew
And play at peace-talk with this pirate crew,
William and Karl and Ferdie—what a gang !

Our Chairman wants to save his skin
And (curse this train !) to cook a plan
For Germany to pouch what spoils she can—
All very nice ; but where do I come in ?

Well, as I've said and said again,
'Tis Fate (Kismet), and, should it frown,
We Faithful have to take it lying down—
And yet, by Allah, how I loathe this train !

January 10, 1917.

The Food of Love

A Lyric of Meatless Days.

EAT to me only with thine eyes
And I will munch with mine ;
Or let my lips but brush thy locks
And I shall seem to dine ;
The hollow 'neath my belt that lies
For flesh of beeves doth pine ;
Yet, might I wolf a roasted ox,
I would, of course, decline.

I sent thee once a juicy steak
To prove thy troth and see
If in that stern ordeal's test
Stedfast thou still wouldst be ;
And thou thereof one sniff didst take
And post it back to me,
Since when I wear it next my chest,
Potted, for love of thee.

March 14, 1917.

The Altruist

[*The Frankfurter Zeitung* protests against the idea that "the Kaiser in Germany's gravest times allows anxiety about himself or his dynasty to have access to his thoughts."]

AMONG the penalties imposed on Kings
Who govern absolutely by divine right,
I am no more affected by the things
That Socialists and other dirty swine write
Than when a pin is thrust
Into a pachyderm's indifferent crust.

But now I deign to answer, even I,
The vilest yet of these revolting sallies,
Where they alleged that, when our German sky
Rocks to the air of "*Deutschland über alles*,"
"Und Ich," I add (aside),
"*Ich über Deutschland!*" There the blighters
lied.

I'm not like that. I never use the first
Personal pronoun, like the Monarch Louis,
Who said (in French—a tongue I deem accurst),
"*L'état, c'est moi.*" My conscience, clear and
dewy,
Tells me that, as a Kaiser,
I am a very poor self-advertiser.

THE ALTRUIST

This is a feature of our dynasty ;
And no historian who has ever studied
The traits peculiar to the family tree
On which the Hohenzollern *genus* budded
In all that noble list
Has come across a single egoist.

They loved their people better than their throne ;
Lightly they sat on it, dispensing Freedom ;
They never said, " Your souls are not your own,
But simply there in case your King should
need 'em ;"
They would have thought it odd
To want to be regarded as a god.

Thus have I served my land ; and if a wave
Of lurid revolution overswept her,
And I, her loyal and obedient slave,
Were called upon to down my orb and sceptre,
That grace I'd freely do,
And so, I'm sure, would Little Willie too.

May 2, 1917.

Symposium of the Central Weaknesses

FERDIE.

My nerves are feeling rather bad
About the news from Petrograd.
Briefly, and speaking as a Tsar,
I think the game has gone too far.
When Liberty gets on the wing
You cannot always stop the thing.
Vices from ill examples grow,
And I might be the next to go.

TINO.

Yes, what has happened over there
May very well occur elsewhere.
Fortune with me may prove as fickle as
It did with poor lamented Nicholas.
It was a silly thing to do
To ape the airs of William Two.
I cannot think what I was at,
Trying to be an autocrat.

SYMPOSIUM OF CENTRAL WEAKNESSES

MEHMED.

I take a very dubious tone
About the fate of Allah's Own.
The Young Turk Party's been my bane
And caused me hours and hours of pain.
But, what would be a bitterer pill,
There may be others Younger Still,
Who, if the facts should get about,
Would want to rise and throw me out.

FERDIE.

I don't believe that William cares
One little fig for my affairs.
He roped me in to this concern
Simply to serve his private turn ;
And never shed a single tear
Over my loss of Monastir.
For tuppence, if I saw my way,
I'd join the others any day.

TINO.

Last year (its memory still is green)—O
How William loved his precious Tino !
He talked about our family ties
And sent me such a lot of spies.
But, since his foes began to squeeze
My guns inside the Peloponnese,
His interest in me has ceased ;
I do not like it in the least.

SYMPOSIUM OF CENTRAL WEAKNESSES

MEHMED.

I lent him troops when things were slack,
And now the beast won't pay 'em back.
He never mentions any "line"
Of Hindenburg's in Palestine.
I cannot sleep ; I get such frights
During these dark Arabian Nights.
But he—he doesn't care a dem.
O Allah ! O Jerusalem !

April 11, 1917.

Official Teuton Triumphs

William to His People.

[According to the *Vossische Zeitung* the Kaiser has issued an order to secure uniformity in "the celebration of victories." In future the Prussian Minister of War will decide what is and what is not "a victory," and, when a victory is official, orders will be issued for the hoisting of flags on public buildings and the firing of salutes, while the ecclesiastical authorities will send out telegrams ordering the ringing of church bells.]

WHEN may you boom a Victory and why ?
Who gives you leave to let the bunting fly
And loud carillons rock the staggered
steeples ?

Official lips alone can state
Whether the facts demand a *fête*,
And not the common people's.

A private citizen should never cheer,
Or drink delight of battle with his beer,
Or touch-off cannon at his own volition ;
True sons of Germany will not
Do anything until they've got
Authority's permission.

OFFICIAL TEUTON TRIUMPHS

So don't expand the individual chest
Over our fine offensive in the West
For joy of some obscure affair of pickets ;
But rather stand in silent queues
Till we announce the sort of news
That warrants Victory-tickets.

Trust us, ere long, to organise a show
Where in the wind all flags at once shall blow
With general salvos uniformly flashing ;
As, when the *Lusitania* sank,
With one accord we danced and drank
And set the joy-bells clashing.

When we have flattened London's final street,
And for a second time our glorious fleet
Sets ocean from the tyrant's cruel spell free,
Wave, flags ! and, cannon, belch your fire !
And to your flocks, ye bishops, wire,
Saying, " Bring down the belfry ! "

September 13, 1916.

Faith and Doubt in the Fatherland

News of triumph, very cheering,
Fills our marrows full of sap,
News of Falkenhayn careering
Right across Roumania's map,
Tales of corn to swell our tummies, tales of
golden oil to tap.

Everywhere we go victorious
Over earth and on the blue ;
More and more superbly glorious
Ring the deeds we dare and do,
Till they sound almost too splendid to be abso-
lutely true.

Here and there, indeed, a sceptic
Mutters language rather rude ;
Here and there a wan dyspeptic,
Yielding to a peevish mood,
Wonders why a winning nation finds itself so
short of food.

When the big bells burst the steeple
And the bunting's ordered out,
I have noticed several people
Ask themselves in honest doubt
Why the War-Lord's lifted finger fails to bring
a peace about.

FAITH AND DOUBT IN THE FATHERLAND

Yet, though England, crushed and
quailing,
Kicks his dove-bird down the stair,
I shall trust, with faith unfailing,
In my Kaiser's conquering air
(Still I blame no man for thinking there must
be a catch somewhere).

January 17, 1917.

To Tino

If to have browsed upon Parnassus' mount
Through years and years and years of school
and college,

Watered my larynx at Castalia's fount
(Neglecting all utilitarian knowledge),
And blown my youth in one long classic beano
Gives me the right to talk with you, O Tino ;

Let me awhile resume my pedant's gown
And speak as one in Greekish wisdom
grounded,

Who knows your city of the olive crown,
Up to your ancient Parthenon has pounded,
Sampled the antiques in your State Museum
And is a member of the Athenæum.

O Tino, what a fall from that great feat
When Hellas knocked the barbarous hordes
of Xerxes,

Biffed him at Salamis and sent his fleet,
His priceless fleet, to drown beneath the murky
seas !

O Tino, you have read your Byron ? Yes ?
What would he think of you ? I dare not
guess.

TO TINO

For you who call yourself a loyal Greek,
You whom with signal favour Fortune
beckoned,
Saying, "Young fellow, here's your chance
(unique)

To figure as Themistocles the Second"—
"Thanks, I'm not taking any," you replied ;
"I'm a Pro-Persian ; I'm the Other Side !"

Hellene by hyphenation, and attached
By marriage bonds to W. Darius,
For him you leave your gates all lightly latched
(Thus differing from Miltiades, the pious),
And tell your people, as you pouch your fee,
"None of your noisy Marathons for me."

Tino, if some day Hellas should arise
A phoenix soaring from her present cinders,
Think not to share her passage to the skies
Or furnish purple copy for her Pindars ;
You'll be in exile, if you don't take care,
Along with brother William, Lord knows
where !

October 18, 1916.

Model Dialogues for Air-Raids

[A few specimen conversations are here suggested as suitable for the aerial conditions to which we have been subjected. The idea is to discourage the Hun by ignoring those conditions or explaining them away. For similar conversations in actual life blank verse would not of course be obligatory.]

I.

- A.* BEAUTIFUL weather for the time of year !
B. A perfect spell, indeed, of halcyon calm,
Most grateful here in Town, and, what is more,
A precious gift to our brave lads in France,
Whose need is sorer, being sick of mud.
A. They have our first thoughts ever, and, if
Heaven
Had not enough good weather to go round,
Gladly I'd sacrifice this present boon
And welcome howling blizzards, hail and flood,
So they, out there, might still be warm and
dry.

II.

- C.* Have you observed the alien in our midst,
How strangely numerous he seems to-day,
Swarming like migrant swallows from the
East ?

MODEL DIALOGUES FOR AIR-RAIDS

D. I take it they would fain elude the net
Spread by Conscription's hands to haul them
in.

All day they lurk in cover Houndsditch way,
Dodging the copper, and emerge at night
To snatch a breath of Occidental air
And drink the ozone of our Underground.

III.

E. How glorious is the Milky Way just now !

F. True. In addition to the regular stars
I saw a number flash and disappear.

E. I too. A heavenly portent, let us hope,
Presaging triumph to our British arms.

IV.

G. Methought I heard yestreen a loudish noise
Closely resembling the report of guns.

H. Ay, you conjectured right. Those sounds
arose

From anti-aircraft guns engaged in practice
Against the unlikely advent of the Hun.
One must be ready in a war like this
To face the most remote contingencies.

G. Something descended on the next back-yard,
Spoiling a dozen of my neighbour's tubers.

H. No doubt a live shell mixed among the blank ;
Such oversights from time to time occur
Even in Potsdam, where the casual sausage
Perishes freely in a *feu de joie*.

MODEL DIALOGUES FOR AIR-RAIDS

V.

J. We missed you badly at our board last night.

K. The loss was mine. I could not get a cab.

Whistling, as you're aware, is banned by law,
And when I went in person on the quest
The streets were void of taxis.

J. And to what
Do you attribute this unusual dearth?

K. The general rush to Halls of Mirth and Song,
Never so popular. The War goes well,
And London's millions needs must find a way
To vent their exaltation—else they burst.

J. But could you not have travelled by the Tube?

K. I did essay the Tube, but found it stuffed.
The atmosphere was solid as a cheese,
And I was loath to penetrate the crowd
Lest it should shove me from behind upon
The electric rail.

J. Can you account for that?

K. I should ascribe it to the harvest moon,
That wakes romance in Metropolitan breasts,
Drawing our young war-workers out of town
To seek the glamour of the country lanes
Under the silvery beams to lovers dear.

October 10, 1917.

T. M. G.

FAREWELL, my Constantine ! A guardian navy
Facilitates your exit on the blue ;
For Greece has been this long while in the gravy
And he that put her there was plainly you ;
“ TINO MUST Go ! ” was writ for all to see,
Or, briefly, “ T. M. G.”

Whither, dear Sir, do you propose to sally ?
To Switzerland's recuperative air,
To sip condensed milk in a private chalet
Or pluck the lissom chamois from his lair,
Or on the summit of a neutral Alp
Recline your crownless scalp ?

Or did you ask from him you love so dearly
A royal haven fenced from rude alarms,
Even though William should reserve you merely
A bedroom at “ The Hohenzollern Arms,”
Having for poor relations on the loose
No sort of further use ?

Beware ! I gather he might clasp his Tino
Only too warmly to his heaving chest,
Saying, “ O how reward such merits ? *We*
know !

Thou shalt command an Army in the West !
Yes, thou shalt bear upon the British Front
The pick of all the brunt.”

T. M. G.

Frankly, if I were you, I wouldn't chance it.
Fighting has never really been your forte ;
Witness Larissa, and your rapid transit,
Chivied by slow foot-sloggers of the Porte ;
Far better make for Denmark o'er the foam ;
There is no place like home.

Try some ancestral palace, well-appointed ;
For choice the one where *Hamlet* nursed his
spite,
Who found the times had grown a bit disjointed
And he was not the man to put 'em right ;
And there consult on that enchanted shore
The ghosts of Elsinore.

June 20, 1917.

The Innocents Abroad

["Stedfastness and righteousness are the qualities which the German people value in the highest degree, and which have brought it a good and honourable reputation in the whole world. When we make experiments in lies and deception, intrigue and low cunning, we suffer hopeless and brutal failure. When our enemies poured all these things upon us like a hailstorm, and we convinced ourselves of the effectiveness of such tactics, we tried to imitate them. But these tactics will not fit the German. We are rough but moral, we are credulous but honest." —HERR DERNBURG, in *Deutsche Politik*.]

IN Eden bowers, so fair to see,
There dwelt, when sin was yet to be,
A guileless Serpent up a tree,
 Sniffing the virgin breezes ;
Till Eve (the huzzy !), one fine day,
With evil purpose came his way,
And led that simple worm astray
 By low and wicked wheezes.

A Wolf there was, quite sweet and good,
Till in his path Red Riding-Hood
Went camouflaging through the wood—
 A brazen little terror ;

THE INNOCENTS ABROAD

Large teeth she had and bulgy eyes
And told the most amazing lies,
And taught him, in a flowery guise,
The downward route to error.

Of Fritz's nature, fresh as morn,
Pure as a babe that's just been born,
Clean as a poodle lately shorn,
These are symbolic samples ;
The Wolf unversed in specious vice,
The Serpent with a taste as nice
As anything in Paradise—
Debauched by bad examples.

England seduced us. 'Neath her spell,
Mistress of lies, we fell and fell
Into the poisoned sink, or well,
Of faked and fabulous rumour ;
And there, as we were bound to do,
We failed, because we love the True,
And loathe the False as alien to
Our artless German humour.

I speak as one who ought to know ;
Myself I tried a trick or so
In U.S.A. and had to go,
Looking absurdly silly ;
And now against us, big with fate,
That Hemisphere has thrown its weight,
Both North and South (though up to date
We haven't heard from Chili).

THE INNOCENTS ABROAD

Laughter we've earned—a noble shame !
Built to achieve a higher aim,
We honest Huns can't play the game
 Of shifty propaganders ;
Henceforth we'd better all get back
On to the straight and righteous track
And help our Hindenburg to hack
 (If not too late) through Flanders.

October 17, 1917.

To the Potsdam Pacifist

Now for the fourth time since you broke your
word,

And started barging through, the seasons'
cycle

Brings Autumn on ; the goose, devoted bird,
Prepares her shrift against the mass of Michael ;

Earth takes the dead leaves' stain,
And Peace, that hardy annual, sprouts again.

Yet why should *you* support the Papal Chair

In fostering this recurrent apparition ?

Never (we gather) were your hopes more fair,

Your *moral* in a more superb condition ;

Never did Victory's goal

Seem more adjacent to your sanguine soul.

Hindenburg holds your British foes in baulk

Prior to trampling them to pulp like vermin ;

Russia is at your mercy—you can walk

Through her to-morrow if you so determine ;

There is no France to fight—

Your gallant Willie's blade has "bled her white."

TO THE POTSDAM PACIFIST

In England (as exposed by trusty spies)

We are reduced to starve on dog and thistles ;
London, with all her forts, in ashes lies ;

Through Scarboro's breached redoubts the sea-
wind whistles ;

And Margate, quite unmanned,
Would cause no trouble if you cared to land.

Roumania is your granary, whence you draw

For loyal tums a constant cornucopia ;

Belgium, quiescent under Culture's law,

Serves as a type of Teutonised Utopia ;

And as for U.S.A.,

They're scheduled to arrive behind The Day.

Why, then, this talk of Peace ? The victor's meed

Lies underneath your nose—why not continue ?

Because humanity makes your bosom bleed ;

So, though you have a giant's strength within
you,

Your gentle heart would shrink
To use it like a giant—I don't think.

September 26, 1917.

The Melting-Pot

[“The municipality of Rothausen has decided to present to the collection of metal which is being made in Germany its monument of Kaiser William the First.”
—*Reuter.*]

HEAVY is Armageddon's price
And loud the call to sacrifice ;
All stuff composed of likely metals—
Door-knockers, hairpins, cans and kettles—
Into the War's insatiate melting-pot
Has to be shot.

That was a hard and bitter blow
When first your church-bells had to go—
Those saintly bells that rang carillons
While in the maw of happy millions
Pure joy and gratitude to Heaven thrilled
For babies killed.

It hurt your Christian hearts to melt
A source of faith so keenly felt ;
And now (worse sacrilege than that) you
Propose to take yon regal statue,
That godlike effigy, and make a gun
Of William One !

THE MELTING POT

What will *He* say when you reduce
His Relative to cannon-juice ?
The prospect must be pretty rotten
If thus the Never-To-Be-Forgotten
Is treated, like the corpses of your friends,
For useful ends.

I hear the All-Highest mutter, " Ha !
They're liquefying Grandpapa !
The nation's needs, that grow acuter,
Count sacred things as so much pewter ;
Even my holy crown may go some day
Down the red way ! "

July 4, 1917.

Tino in Exile

[King Constantine's actual opinion of his Imperial brother-in-law is probably not too amiable ; but it has to be disguised in his letters, which are liable to be censored by his wife.]

THANK you, dear William, I am fairly well.

The climate suits me and the simple life—
No diplomats to spoil the scenery's spell,
And only faintest echoes of the strife ;
The Alps are mirrored in a lake of blue ;
Over my straw-crowned poll the blue skies
laugh ;
A waterfall (no charge) completes a view
Equal to any German oleograph.

There are no bugle blares to make me jump,
But just the jodler calling to his kine ;
A few good Teuton toadies, loud and plump,
More than suffice me in the *levée* line ;
And when poor Alexander, there in Greece,
Writes of your "agents" rounded up and
sacked,
I am content with privacy and peace,
Having, at worst, retained my head intact.

TINO IN EXILE

Sophie and I have thought of you a lot
 (We have so very few distractions here ;
We chat about the weather, which is hot,
 And then we turn to talk of your career) ;
For rumour says this bloody war will last
 Until the Hohenzollerns get the boot ;
And through my brain the bright idea has
 passed
 That you had better do an early scoot.

Were it not wise, dear William, ere the day
 When Revolution goes for crowns and things,
To cut your loss betimes and come this way
 And start a coterie of Exiled Kings ?
You might (the choice of safe retreats is poor)
 Do worse than join me in this happy land,
And spend your last phase, careless, if obscure,
 With your devoted Tino hand-in-hand.

July 11, 1917.

More Sorrows of the Sultan

BEERSHEBA gone, and Gaza too !
And lo ! the British lion,
After a pause to comb his mane,
Is grimly padding off again,
Tail up, *en route* for Zion.

Yes, things are looking rather blue,
Just as in Mesopotamy ;
My life-blood trickles in the sand ;
My veins run dry ; I cannot stand
Much more of this phlebotomy.

In vain for William's help I cry,
Sick as a mule with glanders ;
Too busy—selfish swine—is he
With winning ground in Italy
And losing it in Flanders.

His missives urge me not to fly
But use the utmost fury
To hold these Christian dogs at bay
And for his sake to block the way
To his beloved Jewry.

"My feet," he wires, "have trod those scenes ;
Within the walls of Salem
My sacred presence deigned to dwell,
And I should hate these hounds of hell
To be allowed to scale 'em.

MORE SORROWS OF THE SULTAN

“ So do your best to give them beans
 (You have some ammunition?),
And at a less congested date
I will arrive and consecrate
 Another German mission.”

That's how he wires, alternate days,
 But sends no troops to trammel
The foe that follows as I bump
Across Judæa on the hump
 Of my indifferent camel.

Well, I have tried all means and ways,
 But seldom fail to foozle 'em ;
And now if William makes no sign
(This is his funeral more than mine)
 The giaours can have Jerusalem.

November 14, 1917.

“The Soul of a Nation”

THE little things of which we lately chattered—
The dearth of taxis or the dawn of spring ;
Themes we discussed as though they really
mattered,

Like rationed meat or raiders on the wing ;—

How thin it seems to-day, this vacant prattle,
Drowned by the thunder rolling in the West,
Voice of the great arbitrament of battle
That puts our temper to the final test.

Thither our eyes are turned, our hearts are
straining,

Where those we love, whose courage laughs at
fear,

Amid the storm of steel around them raining,
Go to their death for all we hold most dear.

New-born of this supremest hour of trial,

In quiet confidence shall be our strength,
Fixed on a faith that will not take denial

Nor doubt that we have found our soul at length.

O England, staunch of nerve and strong of sinew,
Best when you face the odds and stand at bay,
Now show a watching world what stuff is in you !
Now make your soldiers proud of you to-day !

April 3, 1918.

Manhood in Arms

“ Si Jeunesse savait, si Vieillesse pouvait.”

HAD Youth the knowledge, Age the power ;
 Could each the other's virtue borrow ;
Could Wisdom pluck the passing hour
And Inexperience share the dower
 Of Wisdom schooled in joy and sorrow !

Yet may the swift occasion rise
 When rules of Time relax their rigour ;
When Youth is suddenly made wise
To see with clear instructed eyes,
 And Age recalls its early vigour.

Such is this hour of England's need
 When close the peril draws upon her,
And Youth, fore-gleaning Wisdom's seed,
And Age, renewed in strength and speed,
 Come to the instant call of Honour.

April 17, 1918.

“ Easy Fruit ”

And a Hard Nut.

O how loud the sabres rattle,
O how bravely flash the swords,
When your Bosches meet in battle
Russia's unresisting hordes !
Woe betide the wretched laggards
On the fringes of the fray
When the Red Guards fly the Blackguards
After pouching German pay,
And you follow by the railroad, finding nothing
in the way.

Then indeed your glorious mettle
Shows you made of martial stuff,
When the prey on which you settle
Hasn't strength to cry, “ Enough ! ”
Thus were laid those deathless laurels
On the headpiece of the Hun
When you downed, in easy quarrels,
Helpless folk that had to run,
When you wolfed the little nations with the odds
at ten to one.

But where you have met your equals,
Gun for gun and man for man,
We have noticed other sequels—
It was mostly you that ran ;

“EASY FRUIT”

With the fighting chances level
You assume a chastened air,
Lift your foul hands like the Devil
When he's sick and takes to prayer,
And it's “Kamerad, kindly put me in a cage and
keep me there !”

Flushed with triumphs cheap and shoddy
Wrung from Lenin's rabble crew,
You may tell your Teuton God he
Merits well of William Two ;
But the West—ah, there we hold you !
There, when next we come to grips,
Lies the issue which shall fold you
In the night of noon's eclipse,
With your favourite cry, “*Væ Victis*,” in your
ears and not your lips !

March 6, 1918.

Disillusion on the Home Front

*(Affectionately dedicated to the Inns of Court
Reserve Corps.)*

BLARE of bugles and throb of drums
Herald our column where it comes
With rhythmical pulse of hob-nailed feet
Debouching into Victoria Street—
Men, to judge by their martial air,
Ripe for valorous work “out there.”

Traffic is stayed ; the surging crowd
Threatens to voice its pride aloud ;
British tradition alone restrains
The ardour that almost bursts its veins
As it breathes God-speed to a gallant corps
Apparently bound for the seat of War.

Glad eyes down from the windows glance
Where you turn to the left to entrain for France ;
Flanking the kerb where the two ways part
We can hear the beat of the flapper's heart ;
Brave is her smile, but her cheeks are wan ;
The turning comes—and we keep straight on.

DISILLUSION ON THE HOME FRONT

The glamour pales as the crowds remark
That our main objective is just Hyde Park ;
They have spent illusory hopes and fears
On a veteran party of Volunteers
(Very deceptive in warlike guise)
Out for their Saturday exercise.

June 5, 1918.

To the Kaiser's Victims

OVER the barriers of your dead you climb,
Flung wave on wave across the tortured plain ;
And pay for every rood of reeking slime
Its myriad toll of newly-slain.

And ever, where your legions on us broke,
Close-packed to give them courage, drugged
and driven,
Our line has held as when a forest oak
Rocks to the storm but stands unriven.

How long before the horror grows too grim ?
Before you tire of playing the dumb slave's part
Sent to his death to suit a master's whim,
And something snaps within your heart ?

For you have lost the old illusion's spell,
The faith that you were called of Heaven to
fight

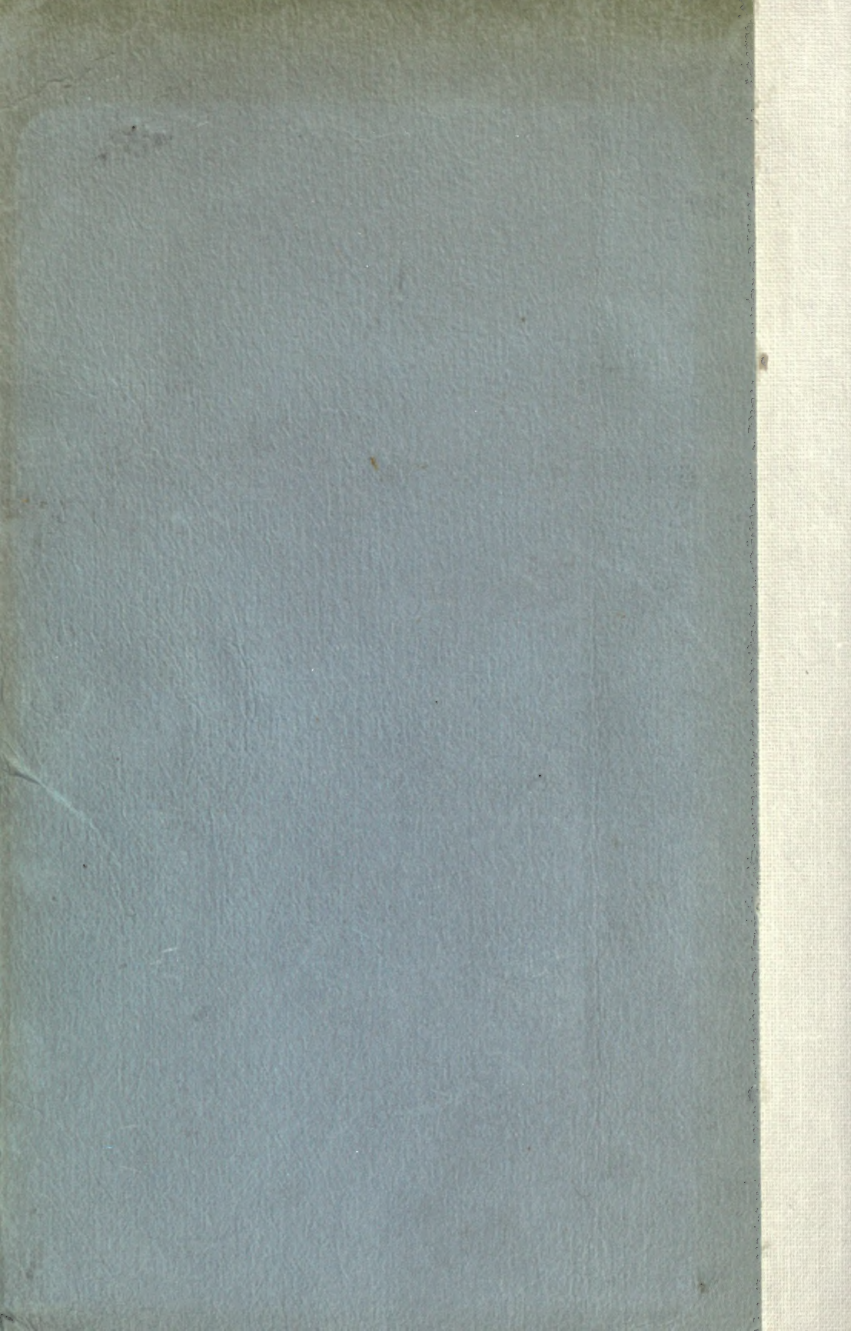
Against the onset of the lords of hell
Leagued to destroy the sons of light.

Now, when that faith is blown to barren dust,
How long, I wonder, will you care to die,
Having no King whose word a man may trust,
Nor any Cause except a lie ?

April 24, 1918.

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PR

Seaman, (Sir) Owen

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From the home front

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